

Jefferds Tavern  
Wells, Maine

HABS-ME-43

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ME.

16-WEL

3.

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

District of Maine

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Josiah T. Tubby, District Officer  
537 Congress St., Portland, Maine

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"JEFFERDS TAVERN"

Wells, York County, Maine

Owner

George B. Lord  
142 East Emerson St.  
Melrose, Mass.

Date of Erection

About 1760

Builder

Captain Samuel Jeffords

Present Condition

Outbuildings including a stable and wood shed which were located at the rear of the tavern have entirely disappeared. In 1922, the tavern was repaired, exterior clapboards replaced where needed, re-roofed with asphalt roofing. The building has been painted yellow with white trim. Exposed section of the chimney has been repaired. Some sections of the interior have also been repaired, but the original appearance of the interior is not believed to have been materially changed. Most of the wood work in the interior is unpainted and the pine used in the panelling and trim has mellowed a reddish brown.

Number of Stories

Two and One Half with Lean To.

Materials of Construction

Foundation of brick underpinned with stone. Floors of pine. Exterior walls clapboarded. Interior walls plastered and panelled. Gable roof with leanto which slopes to height of one story at rear. Five fireplaces, inside sliding shutters, brick of chimneys and fireplaces laid in clay. Before the building was repaired, it is said that the kitchen ceiling had the appearance of having been washed with clay paint and the walls "yellow washed."

Other Existing Records

Mention is made of the Jeffers Tavern in Remick's History of Kennebunk, and in the History of Wells and Kennebunk(Bourne). "A Stroll Thro' The Past" by William E. Barry(Pages 66-76), history of the tavern and explanation of the original construction of the building with sketch of the tavern and map showing location.

Additional Data

Remick's History of Kennebunk states that the tavern was in operation about 1775. It is located at Cole's Hill or "Sandy Hill", near the former site of Pike's Mill, close by the Merriland River. "Samuel Jefferds built a house here and kept a tavern which was in operation about the time of the Revolutionary War. It was much frequented and was considered an excellent inn."

The reason for the location of the tavern on Sandy Hill was that near the site of the tavern was a fording place on the Merriland River. Mills had been erected at Harriseeket. A new way was also required to reach them. At the time of the building of the tavern, the road from Boston forked to the right down to the sea, and to the left over Sandy Hill, both forks coming together again in Kennebunk. It is thought that the branch which crossed Cole's Hill may have been the road most frequented by travellers from Boston. This reason and the fact that the river was easily forded near the site of the tavern, explains the site chosen for the tavern.

It is said that during the Revolutionary War, a Regiment from the District of Maine on its march westward halted at the Jefferds Tavern and lodged and encamped for the night in and about the tavern.

Before the tavern was repaired(1922), the exterior walls showed traces of paint or yellow wash which was probably applied about 1850.

Captain Samuel Jefferds was the son of the Rev. Samuel Jefferds who was one of the first ministers of Wells.

Captain Jefferds, besides running the tavern, also owned a grist mill and a fulling mill(a mill for shrinking and cleansing wool and woolen cloth). The mill stone over the well at the tavern is supposed to be one of a pair used in Samuel Jefferd's grist mill which was located on the Merriland River. William Barry in "A Stroll Thro' The Past" states that early stone abutments and wall bordering the stream can yet be seen.

*Eleanor E. Jannell*

Approved:

*James T. Fudge*

Date

*Dec 18 1936*

*TW 4/9/37*